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INFO SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

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SUBJECT: A SADC PRIMER: TIME FOR A REVISED EDITION?

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¶1. SUMMARY. SOUTHERN AFRICA IS INCREASINGLY TOUTED AS THE CONTINENT'S ENGINE OF GROWTH, WITH THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC) DRIVING THE TRAIN. SADC HAS MATURED SIGNIFICANTLY SINCE ITS FORMATION IN 1992, BUT FORGING REGIONAL COOPERATION FROM NATIONALIST PROCLIVITIES IS AS DELICATE A PROCESS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND NORTH AMERICA. THE SADC SECRETARIAT, WITH ITS AMORPHOUS ROLE AND LIMITED RESOURCES, HAS PROVEN TO BE NO MATCH FOR STRONG NATIONAL LEADERS WITH SOMETIMES CONFLICTING IDEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES, WHO HAVE OFTEN DOMINATED THE ORGANIZATION. AS ITS MANDATE EXPANDS BEYOND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TO STATESMANSHIP, SADC IS STRUGGLING TO LIVE UP TO THE WORLD'S EXPECTATIONS. WHETHER SADC'S ORIGINAL STRUCTURE IS UP TO THE TASK IS CURRENTLY UNDER DEBATE, AND PROMISES TO FEATURE PROMINENTLY AT THE SEPTEMBER SADC SUMMIT IN MALAWI.

¶2. NONETHELESS, SADC STATES HAVE MORE IN COMMON THAN JUST GEOGRAPHY, AND THEREIN LIES SOME OF THE ORGANIZATION'S TRUE POTENTIAL. THE 12 COUNTRIES SHARE A CONSENSUAL APPROACH TO REGIONAL DECISION-MAKING, ESPOUSE (BUT DON'T ALWAYS PRACTICE) DEMOCRATIC IDEALS, AND PROMOTE A LARGELY FREE MARKET APPROACH TO DOING BUSINESS. ULTIMATELY, SOUTH AFRICA, AS THE ORGANIZATION'S DOMINANT MEMBER, REMAINS THE KEY TO BALANCED REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT. ITS NEIGHBORS ARE KEEPING AN INTERESTED IF WARY EYE ON THE INDICATORS OF SOUTH AFRICA'S COMMITMENT TO REGIONAL INTEGRATION. FOR SADC TO ACHIEVE ITS DUAL GOALS OF BALANCED REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND POLITICAL STABILITY AND SECURITY, SOUTH AFRICA AND ITS SADC PARTNERS WILL HAVE TO BACK THE REGIONAL INTEGRATION CONCEPT WITH MORE THAN WORDS. THEY HAVE TAKEN THE INITIATIVE TO ASSESS THEIR PERFORMANCE AND DIRECTION. NOW THEY ARE FACING THE TRUE TEST OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION: IMPLEMENTING REFORMS THAT MAY INVOLVE DIFFICULT COMPROMISES BY SOME FOR THE GOOD OF ALL. END SUMMARY.

GENESIS

¶3. THE 12-MEMBER SADC EVOLVED FROM THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COORDINATING CONFERENCE (SADCC), WHICH WAS FOUNDED IN 1980 BY THE FRONTLINE STATES (FLS) TO ADVANCE REGIONAL COOPERATION AGAINST APARTHEID. WITH APARTHEID'S DEMISE, SADCC'S ROLE SHIFTED FROM ISOLATING APARTHEID TO PROMOTING THE FLS' ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. IN AUGUST, 1992, "SADCC" EMERGED AS "SADC," WITH AN UPDATED MANDATE OF FOSTERING ECONOMIC PROSPERITY, DEVELOPMENT, AND STABILITY THROUGH REGIONAL TRADE LIBERALIZATION AND POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INTEGRATION.

¶4. WHEREAS SADCC HAD WORKED TO COORDINATE MEMBER STATES' ECONOMIES ON SPECIFIC PROJECTS WITH REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS, THE NEW SADC HAS FOCUSED ON INTEGRATING STATES' ACTIVITIES INTO REGIONAL ACTION. SOUTH AFRICA, THE FORMER PARIAH, NOW PLAYS A PIVOTAL ROLE IN SADC'S REGIONAL INTEGRATION STRATEGY, AS DOES THE STABILITY OF THOSE COUNTRIES (MOZAMBIQUE, ANGOLA, NAMIBIA) EMERGING FROM CIVIL WAR. THE 1992 SADC TREATY COMMITS MEMBER COUNTRIES TO HARMONIZE AND RATIONALIZE THEIR DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND STRATEGIES; AN AMBITIOUS GOAL FOR 12 COUNTRIES WITH WIDELY DIFFERING CAPACITIES FOR GROWTH. THE TREATY IS ENFORCEABLE THROUGH SANCTIONS, WHICH MAY BE IMPOSED AGAINST A MEMBER STATE THAT 1) PERSISTENTLY FAILS TO FULFILL ITS

OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE SADC TREATY, 2) IMPLEMENTS POLICIES WHICH UNDERMINE THE PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES OF SADC, OR 3) IS MORE THAN ONE YEAR OVERDUE IN PAYING ITS DUES WITHOUT HAVING OBTAINED A DISPENSATION FROM SADC.

SUMMIT OF HEADS OF STATE

15. THE TEN ORIGINAL MEMBERS (ANGOLA, BOTSWANA, LESOTHO, MALAWI, MOZAMBIQUE, NAMIBIA, SWAZILAND, TANZANIA, ZAMBIA, ZIMBABWE) WELCOMED SOUTH AFRICA INTO SADC IN AUGUST, 1994, FOLLOWED BY MAURITIUS IN 1995. SOUTH AFRICA'S PRESIDENT MANDELA HAS BEEN CHAIRMAN OF THE SADC SUMMIT OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT (SUMMIT) SINCE 1996, REPLACING BOTSWANA'S PRESIDENT MASIRE WHO HELD THE OFFICE SINCE SADC'S INCEPTION. AS THE ULTIMATE POLICY-MAKING INSTITUTION OF SADC, THE SUMMIT SETS THE COMMUNITY'S OVERALL POLICY DIRECTION, CREATES COMMISSIONS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS, AND APPOINTS THE EXECUTIVE AND DEPUTY EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE SADC SECRETARIAT, LOCATED IN GABORONE. THE NEXT SUMMIT MEETING, SCHEDULED TO BEGIN ON SEPTEMBER 8 IN MALAWI, IS EXPECTED TO TACKLE CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES RANGING FROM EXPANDING SADC'S MEMBERSHIP, TO RESTRUCTURING THE ORGANIZATION, TO FINALIZING SADC'S POSITION ON TRADE WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU).

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

16. THE SUMMIT IS ADVISED BY A COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, WHICH ALSO APPROVES SADC POLICIES, STRATEGIES AND WORK PROGRAMS. COMPRISED OF MINISTERS FROM EACH STATE (GENERALLY PLANNING OR FINANCE MINISTERS), THE COUNCIL OVERSEES THE FUNCTIONING AND DEVELOPMENT OF SADC AND ENSURES POLICY IMPLEMENTATION. IT ALSO ASSIGNS SPECIFIC AREAS OF COOPERATION TO SECTOR COORDINATING UNITS ESTABLISHED WITHIN THE APPROPRIATE MINISTRY IN EACH MEMBER STATE. A STANDING COMMITTEE OF OFFICIALS, COMPRISED OF A PERMANENT SECRETARY FROM EACH MEMBER STATE, ACTS AS TECHNICAL ADVISOR TO THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. MEMBERS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ALSO SERVE AS NATIONAL CONTACT POINTS RESPONSIBLE FOR SADC MATTERS, LINKING OTHER AGENCIES OF GOVERNMENT WITH SADC.

SECTOR COORDINATING UNITS

17. SADC'S EIGHTEEN SECTOR COORDINATING UNITS CURRENTLY ARE DIVIDED AMONGST THE TWELVE MEMBERS, WITH A SECTORAL COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS SUPERVISING EACH COORDINATING UNIT. RANGING FROM ENERGY (ANGOLA) TO TOURISM (MAURITIUS) TO LABOR (ZAMBIA), THE COORDINATING UNITS SPEARHEAD THE REGIONAL POLICIES AND PROGRAMS FOR EACH PARTICULAR SECTOR. INDIVIDUAL MEMBER STATES PROVIDE FUNDING AND STAFF TO ADMINISTER THEIR RESPECTIVE SECTOR COORDINATING UNITS, WHICH FUNCTION AS PART OF THAT STATE'S NATIONAL GOVERNMENT.

18. THE CAPACITY OF INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES TO STEER SADC'S PROGRAMS IN PARTICULAR SECTORS VARIES CONSIDERABLY. LOGJAMS HAVE IMPEDED PROGRESS WHEN EXPERTISE, EFFICIENCY, OR DOMESTIC DISTRACTIONS PREVENT THE MINISTRY FROM PROMOTING ITS SECTOR EFFECTIVELY AND DYNAMICALLY. ANGOLA'S PREOCCUPATION WITH RESOLVING ITS CIVIL WAR HAS WEAKENED ITS ABILITY TO LEAD SADC ON ENERGY ISSUES, THE SECTOR IT HEADS AND ARGUABLY ONE OF THE SECTORS MOST CRITICAL TO THE REGION'S MODERNIZATION. SWAZILAND'S LACK OF EXPERTISE (AND FAILURE TO SEEK IT OUT) IN HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN BLAMED FOR THE SLOW PROGRESS IN THAT VITAL SECTOR. ADDED TO SUCH WEAKNESSES IS A LACK OF INTER-SECTORAL COORDINATION THAT FURTHER DISRUPTS REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS. OFTEN BLAMED FOR SADC'S UNEVEN PERFORMANCE, THE COORDINATING UNITS REVEAL THE HANDICAP THAT THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND POLITICAL DISPARITIES AMONG THE SADC COUNTRIES CAUSES.

CONSOLIDATION PROPOSAL: EFFICIENT BUT UNPOPULAR

19. IN AN ATTEMPT TO REVITALIZE SADC AND IMPROVE ITS EFFECTIVENESS, MEMBERS COMMISSIONED A REVIEW OF THE ORGANIZATION'S STRUCTURE IN 1995. THE REPORT RECOMMENDED CONSOLIDATING THE COORDINATING UNITS INTO FIVE DIRECTORATES

THAT WOULD FOCUS MORE ON POLICY THAN PROJECT COORDINATION. EXISTING SECTORS WOULD BE CLUSTERED TOGETHER IN KEY AREAS OF COOPERATION FOR GREATER FLEXIBILITY: 1) AGRICULTURE, NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT; 2) HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY; 3) INFRASTRUCTURE, COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY; 4) TRADE, INDUSTRY, INVESTMENT AND FINANCE; AND 5) COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, CULTURE AND INFORMATION. A POSSIBLE SIXTH DIRECTORATE FOR WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT MIGHT BE REQUIRED, ACCORDING TO THE REPORT. THE DIRECTORATES WOULD BE FUNDED BY REGIONAL RESOURCES (IN PART TO REDUCE DEPENDENCY ON DONORS) AND STAFFED BY REGIONAL PROFESSIONALS.

¶10. WHILE THIS MAY BE A MORE EFFICIENT APPROACH, IT HAS ENCOUNTERED FIERCE RESISTANCE FROM A NUMBER OF SADC STATES, SOME OF WHICH WOULD LOSE THEIR SECTOR OF RESPONSIBILITY. AS THE REPORT POINTS OUT, SADC'S PRESENT STRUCTURE HAS ENSURED A SENSE OF "OWNERSHIP" BY MEMBER STATES AND AVOIDED EXCESSIVE TENSIONS WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION BY EQUALIZING THE FLOW OF BENEFITS. DECIDING WHERE THE DIRECTORATES WOULD BE BASED WOULD LIKELY INVOLVE A STICKY, AND HIGHLY CHARGED, DEBATE AMIDST FEARS OF CERTAIN STATES DOMINATING THE ORGANIZATION. AS USAID DISCOVERED IN 1996 WHEN SADC MEMBERS CRITICIZED THE SECRETARIAT FOR SIGNING AGREEMENTS ON SADC'S BEHALF, ENTHUSIASM FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION HAS NOT OVERCOME CONCERNS ABOUT CEDING NATIONAL CONTROL, IF NOT SOVEREIGNTY, TO A CENTRAL, SUPRA-NATIONAL SECRETARIAT.

¶11. COST CONCERNS MAY ALSO WORK AGAINST CONSOLIDATION. CURRENTLY, EACH STATE CONTROLS EXPENDITURES FOR THE OPERATIONAL EXPENSES OF ITS SECTOR. UNDER THE NEW PROPOSAL, MEMBERS WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO A CENTRAL FUND THAT WOULD FINANCE ADMINISTRATION OF THE DIRECTORATES. SOME STATES FEAR THIS MIGHT BE MORE EXPENSIVE THAN THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENT, WHICH LETS THEM DECIDE HOW MUCH (OR HOW LITTLE) TO SPEND ON THEIR SADC SECTOR OF RESPONSIBILITY. THE REPORT SUGGESTS THAT CONTRIBUTIONS MIGHT BE DETERMINED BASED ON POPULATION, GDP, OR GDP PER CAPITA; OPTIONS THAT AGAIN RAISE CONCERNS OF DOMINANCE BY SOME MEMBERS. THE RECOMMENDATION THAT SADC SHOULD SOLICIT GREATER PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT IN ITS PROGRAM OF ACTION HAS ALSO GENERATED CONTROVERSY.

¶12. THE REPORT'S PROPOSALS WERE DISCUSSED BY DELEGATIONS FROM THE 12 SADC STATES AT A RECENT REGIONAL WORKSHOP IN GABORONE ON THE RATIONALIZATION OF THE SADC PROGRAM OF ACTION. AFTER A CONTENTIOUS OPENING SESSION, THE WORKSHOP ORGANIZERS CHANGED THE FORMAT TO CLOSED SESSION DISCUSSIONS. THE WORKSHOP'S RECOMMENDATIONS WILL BE CONSIDERED AT THE UPCOMING COUNCIL OF MINISTERS' MEETING IN BLANTYRE AT WHICH THE RESTRUCTURING ISSUE IS EXPECTED TO TOP THE AGENDA.

SADC SECRETARIAT -----

¶13. THE REPORT ALSO TARGETED THE SADC SECRETARIAT FOR STREAMLINING, SUGGESTING THAT ITS FUNCTIONS BE LIMITED TO POLICY HARMONIZATION, LOBBYING, PUBLIC RELATIONS AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION, AND ADMINISTRATION. CURRENTLY, THE SECRETARIAT'S PROFESSIONAL STAFF IS RESPONSIBLE FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF SADC PROGRAMS, AS WELL AS GENERAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE COMMUNITY, INCLUDING FINANCES AND DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION. OPERATIONAL COSTS OF RUNNING THE SECRETARIAT ARE FUNDED FROM CONTRIBUTIONS BY MEMBER STATES IN EQUAL AMOUNTS SET BY THE COUNCIL.

¶14. HEADQUARTERED IN GABORONE, THE SECRETARIAT HAS BEEN CRITICIZED AS INEFFICIENT AND INEFFECTIVE. SOME MEMBERS ADVOCATE ABOLISHING THE SECRETARIAT ALTOGETHER, ALTHOUGH NO REALISTIC ALTERNATIVES HAVE BEEN PRESENTED. EARLIER THIS YEAR, THE SECRETARIAT CAME UNDER ATTACK FOR MISMANAGEMENT, WITH SOME MEMBERS REPORTEDLY CALLING FOR THE REMOVAL OF EXECUTIVE SECRETARY DR. KAIRE MBUENDE OF NAMIBIA. DR. MBUENDE ESCAPED RELATIVELY UNSCATHED, THOUGH HIS LEADERSHIP STYLE HAS NOT MADE HIM POPULAR. SADC HEADS OF STATE WILL DECIDE AT THE MALAWI MEETING WHETHER TO REAPPOINT DR. MBUENDE FOR ANOTHER FOUR YEARS WHEN HIS PRESENT TERM EXPIRES IN DECEMBER. AS THE RESTRUCTURING REPORT POINTS OUT, MANY OF THE COMPLAINTS LODGED

AGAINST THE SECRETARIAT COULD BE ADDRESSED BY CLARIFYING THE SECRETARIAT'S MANDATE AND ALLOCATING SUFFICIENT RESOURCES FOR IT TO IMPLEMENT ITS RESPONSIBILITIES.

PROTOCOLS: JUST ONE OF MANY STEPS

¶15. WHILE IT GRAPPLES WITH RATIONALIZING ITS PROGRAM OF ACTION AND STRUCTURE, THERE IS NO SHORTAGE OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR SADC TO BUILD A REPUTATION AS AN INFLUENTIAL REGIONAL BLOCK. THE WEAK LINK AT THIS STAGE SEEMS TO BE TOO MANY OPPORTUNITIES TOO SOON, WITH SADC OUTGROWING ITS RESOURCES AND CAPABILITIES, ACCORDING TO THE RESTRUCTURING REPORT. SADC HAS FORGED AN ARRAY OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL TIES IN THE FORM OF PROTOCOLS THAT AFFIRM GENERAL PRINCIPLES; NOW IT IS FACED WITH THE COMPLEX AND TIME-CONSUMING TASK OF PUTTING FLESH ON THE BONES OF THOSE PROTOCOLS BEFORE EVENTS OVERTAKE THE PROCESS. USAID'S REGIONAL CENTER FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA (RCSA) IS FUNDING WORKSHOPS AND PROGRAMS TO SPEED UP IMPLEMENTATION OF SADC POLICY AGREEMENTS AND PROTOCOLS AND TO ENSURE THE FINAL PRODUCTS REFLECT THE NEEDS AND PRIORITIES OF ALL STAKEHOLDERS.

¶16. IN THE MEANTIME, THE MOMENTUM FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THIS BURGEONING REGION PUSHES SADC STATES INTO ACTION, SOMETIMES UNILATERALLY, WITHOUT THE BENEFIT OF LONG-TERM, COORDINATED REGIONAL PLANNING. NAMIBIA'S RECENT PLAN TO DIVERT WATER FROM THE OKAVANGO RIVER, WHICH ORIGINATES IN THE ANGOLAN HIGHLANDS AND EMPTIES INTO BOTSWANA'S FAMED OKAVANGO DELTA, HIGHLIGHTED THE NEED FOR A REGIONAL APPROACH TO MANAGEMENT OF SHARED WATERCOURSES. MEMBER STATES SIGNED THE SADC PROTOCOL ON SHARED WATERCOURSES IN 1995 BUT IT WILL BE MONTHS BEFORE THAT IS TRANSLATED INTO POLICIES AND ACTION. DROUGHT-PRONE NAMIBIA MAY NOT BE ABLE TO WAIT FOR REGIONAL COORDINATION, THOUGH IT HAS ENGAGED IN REGULAR CONSULTATIONS WITH THE BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT REGARDING THE PIPELINE PROJECT'S IMPLEMENTATION.

¶17. THE PLIGHT OF THE SADC TRADE PROTOCOL, ONE OF THE ORGANIZATION'S PRIMARY RAISON D'ETRE, DEMONSTRATES THE CONSEQUENCES OF TRYING TO DO TOO MUCH, TOO FAST. HEATED DEBATE OVER SUCH CONTENTIOUS POINTS AS FREE MOVEMENT OF CAPITAL AND LABOR, TARIFF REDUCTIONS, STANDARDIZATION OF REGULATIONS AND LEGAL PROCEDURES HAS MADE PROGRESS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TRADE PROTOCOL (RATIFIED BY ONLY TWO COUNTRIES TO DATE) PAINFULLY SLOW. A REGION-WIDE SHORTAGE OF EXPERTS TO NEGOTIATE COMPLICATED TARIFF REDUCTIONS ADDS TO EXISTING CAPACITY DISPARITIES WITHIN SADC, MAKING IT EVEN MORE DIFFICULT TO FINALIZE PROTOCOL DETAILS. (REFTEL A).

¶18. IN THE MEANTIME, SOME SADC STATES ARE NEGOTIATING AND SIGNING BILATERAL TRADE AGREEMENTS WHILE OTHERS DEFER NEGOTIATIONS TO ENSURE CONSISTENCY WITH THE REGIONAL AGREEMENT. SOUTH AFRICA HAS HELD UP ITS TRADE DISCUSSIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION, CLAIMING THAT IT CANNOT SUBMIT ITS PROPOSAL FOR A FREE TRADE PACT WITH THE EU UNTIL THE SADC TRADE PROTOCOL TERMS HAVE BEEN FINALIZED, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS. AT A RECENT MEETING IN TANZANIA, SADC TRADE MINISTERS WERE ABLE TO AGREE ON A GENERAL TIMETABLE FOR NEGOTIATIONS ON A PROPOSAL TO FREE REGIONAL TRADE EXCHANGES WITHIN EIGHT YEARS; A START, BUT A LONG WAY FROM PROCLAIMING A SADC FREE TRADE AREA.

POLITICAL ORGAN

¶19. RECOGNIZING THAT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPENDS ON POLITICAL STABILITY, SADC HAS BROADENED ITS MISSION TO INCLUDE POLITICS AND SECURITY. IN 1995, MEMBERS ESTABLISHED THE ORGAN FOR POLITICS, SECURITY AND DEFENSE (POLITICAL ORGAN) TO PROMOTE COOPERATION ON POLITICAL AND SECURITY ISSUES OF A REGIONAL NATURE. CURRENTLY CHAIRED BY ZIMBABWE'S PRESIDENT MUGABE, THE POLITICAL ORGAN IS AIMED AT CONFLICT PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT. THE GREAT LAKES CRISES AND THE AFRICAN CRISIS RESPONSE INITIATIVE (ACRI) PRESENTED TWO RECENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR SADC TO RESPOND REGIONALLY TO EVENTS OF GLOBAL IMPORTANCE. MUGABE'S FAILURE TO CONVENE THE ORGAN TO ADDRESS EITHER ISSUE

CREATED A VOID WHERE SADC MIGHT HAVE HAD AN INFLUENTIAL VOICE. HIS TIGHT REIN NOT ONLY PREVENTED SADC FROM TAKING A FORMAL POSITION, IT MADE IT DIFFICULT FOR INDIVIDUAL MEMBER STATES TO ACT OFFICIALLY, OUT OF DEFERENCE TO THE REGIONAL BODY.

¶20. ZIMBABWE'S LACK OF DECISIVE RESPONSE TO UNFOLDING SECURITY CONCERNS MAY BE PART OF AN INTERNAL STRUGGLE BETWEEN MUGABE AND MANDELA TO ALTER THE PROFILE OF THE POLITICAL ORGAN WITHIN THE SADC ORGANIZATION, BOTSWANA DEFENSE FORCE (BDF) COMMANDER LT. GEN. IAN KHAMA SAID AT A JUNE MEETING WITH ACTING A/S TWADDELL IN WASHINGTON (REFTEL A). KHAMA SPECULATED THAT MANDELA MIGHT BE SEEKING TO RE-POSITION THE ORGAN AS A SECTOR RATHER THAN A SEPARATE SADC ENTITY IN ORDER TO CURB MUGABE'S TENDENCY TO USE HIS POSITION AS ORGAN CHAIRPERSON TO SPEAK UNILATERALLY ON SADC'S BEHALF. (NOTE. REFTEL B REFLECTS A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE ON PROPOSALS TO CONSOLIDATE THE SADC AND ORGAN CHAIRMANSHIPS. END NOTE.) IF KHAMA IS RIGHT, MANDELA (AND PERHAPS OTHERS) MAY HAVE HONED IN ON TWO IMPEDIMENTS THAT HAVE WEAKENED SADC'S ABILITY TO CONSOLIDATE ITS POWER AS A REGIONAL ORGANIZATION: PERSONALITIES AND COHESION.

HOW BIG IS "SOUTHERN" AFRICA

¶21. HOW SADC CAN AND SHOULD FUNCTION TO PROMOTE REGIONALISM IS STILL BEING DEBATED. THE INFLUENCE OF STRONG REGIONAL LEADERS (AND DONORS) ON THE DIRECTION AND PROGRESS IN SECTORS SOMETIMES OUTWEIGHS THE ORGANIZATION'S INPUT. EVEN SADC'S COMPOSITION ISN'T FULLY SETTLED, WITH TALK OF MEMBERSHIP FOR THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DROC), KENYA, UGANDA, THE SEYCHELLES, AND MADAGASCAR SURFACING PERIODICALLY. SADC EXECUTIVE SECRETARY MBUENDE RENEWED THE INVITATION TO KENYA AND UGANDA DURING JUNE MEETINGS WITH THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE REVITALIZED COMMISSION FOR EAST AFRICAN COOPERATION (EAC). (NOTE: TANZANIA IS THE THIRD MEMBER OF THE EAC, AND ALSO A MEMBER OF SADC. END NOTE.) PRESIDENT MUGABE AND NAMIBIA'S PRESIDENT NUJOMA HAVE PUBLICLY EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR DROC'S ADMISSION TO SADC, AND MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS BY THE DROC AND THE SEYCHELLES ARE UP FOR CONSIDERATION AT THE BLANTYRE SADC SUMMIT, ACCORDING TO DR. MBUENDE.

¶22. NEITHER KENYA NOR UGANDA IS EXPECTED TO ACCEPT SADC'S INVITATION, THOUGH NEITHER HAS OFFICIALLY REFUSED THE OFFER, SADC'S SENIOR ECONOMIST DR. CHUNGU MWILA TOLD POLOFF. DR. MWILA PREDICTED THAT THE RESOURCE-RICH DROC WOULD JOIN SADC BEFORE ANY OTHER CONTENDERS, BUT ADDED THAT THE SITUATION IN DROC WOULD HAVE TO STABILIZE FIRST. (COMMENT: GIVEN SADC'S PRIDE IN THE STABILITY AND DEMOCRATIC COMMITMENT OF ITS MEMBERS, AND THE RECOGNITION THAT COORDINATING 12 COUNTRIES IS A CHALLENGE, IT SEEMS UNLIKELY DROC MEMBERSHIP WILL BE APPROVED AT THIS TIME. END COMMENT.) IT WOULD TAKE A UNANIMOUS DECISION OF THE SADC SUMMIT FOR A NEW COUNTRY TO BE ADMITTED TO SADC, AND SOME STATES, SUCH AS BOTSWANA, WOULD PREFER TO SEE THE ORGANIZATION RUNNING MORE EFFECTIVELY BEFORE NEW MEMBERS ARE ADDED.

¶23. A MORE LIKELY SCENARIO IS THAT SADC WILL STRENGTHEN ITS COOPERATION WITH OTHER REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN AFRICA, LATIN AMERICA, AND SOUTH EAST ASIA. DR. MBUENDE HAS STATED THAT STRONGER "SOUTH-SOUTH" TIES WILL BOLSTER THE POSITION OF AFRICA WITHIN THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION (WTO), GIVING AFRICAN COUNTRIES MORE OF A VOICE IN SETTING THE POLICIES AND REGULATIONS THAT AFFECT THEM. ENSURING COMPLEMENTARY AGENDAS IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT WHERE MEMBERSHIP OVERLAPS, AS IN THE CASE OF TANZANIA WHICH IS A MEMBER OF SADC AND THE EAC, DR. MBUENDE SAID FOLLOWING THE JUNE EAC MEETINGS. HE ALSO RECOGNIZED THE CRITICAL ROLE REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES WILL PLAY IN BRINGING THE AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY (AEC) TO LIFE. IMPROVED RELATIONS BETWEEN SADC AND THE COMMON MARKET FOR EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA (COMESA), INCLUDING RECENT MEETINGS BETWEEN SADC'S EXECUTIVE SECRETARY MBUENDE AND COMESA'S SECRETARY-GENERAL ERASTUS MWENCHA, HAVE EASED THE RIVALRY THAT HAS HAMPERED COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO OVERLAPPING TRADE BLOCKS.

124. SADC MAINTAINS REGULAR DIALOGUE WITH ITS INTERNATIONAL COOPERATING PARTNERS (GOVERNMENTS, NGOS) THROUGH CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCES AT WHICH PROGRAMS AND RESULTS ARE EVALUATED AND FUTURE PLANS ARE DISCUSSED. BY INVOLVING A BROAD RANGE OF INTERESTED PARTIES IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING PROTOCOLS AND POLICIES, SADC HAS TRIED TO BREAK DOWN THE PREJUDICES OF GOVERNMENTS AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR, AND BUILD TRUST IN THE REGIONAL INTEGRATION CONCEPT. THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DISPARITIES AMONG SADC STATES FREQUENTLY TEST THE PRINCIPLES OF BALANCE, EQUITY AND MUTUAL BENEFIT WHICH UNDERLIE SADC'S MAJOR POLICY GUIDELINES.

125. ONE WAY TO BRIDGE THE GAP IS BY FINDING COMMON GROUND IN THE NATIONAL POLICIES AND PLANS OF MEMBER STATES. IDENTIFYING WHERE COUNTRIES CAN LEARN FROM EACH OTHER AND WORKING TO HARMONIZE DEVELOPING POLICIES, SADC HAS SOUGHT TO PROMOTE A REGIONAL AGENDA. TELECOMMUNICATIONS, IN PARTICULAR, IS A SECTOR WHERE SADC STATES, AT VARYING STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT, HAVE BENEFITED FROM LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER'S SUCCESSES AND FAILURES. IN THE NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT FIELD, BOTSWANA'S PROGRESSIVE TECHNIQUES HAVE SET AN EXAMPLE THAT OTHER SADC STATES CAN ADOPT AND ADAPT. BY SEEKING REGIONAL SOLUTIONS TO WHAT INITIALLY APPEAR TO BE NATIONAL PROBLEMS, SADC STATES ARE IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF SADC PROGRAMS, AND REDUCING THE CHANCES FOR CROSS-BORDER CONFLICTS. TENSIONS BETWEEN BOTSWANA AND NAMIBIA OVER A VETERINARY FENCE CONSTRUCTED BY BOTSWANA ALONG ITS NORTHERN BORDER EASED AFTER SADC'S EXECUTIVE SECRETARY (ALONG WITH OTHERS) URGED BOTH SIDES TO FIND A SOLUTION. ONE POSSIBILITY UNDER DISCUSSION IS A TRANS-BORDER PARK TO PRESERVE WILDLIFE MIGRATION ROUTES AND PROTECT COMMUNITY-BASED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROJECTS.

COMMENT

126. THE SADC TREATY REQUIRES THAT STRONG MEMBERS ASSIST WEAKER STATES, AN OBLIGATION THAT IN PRACTICE SOMETIMES TRANSLATES INTO STRATEGIES THAT PROMOTE THE INTERESTS OF DOMINANT MEMBERS. SACRIFICING SOVEREIGNTY FOR REGIONAL DECISION-MAKING REQUIRES A FLEXIBILITY THAT NOT ALL SADC COUNTRIES POSSESS...OR CAN AFFORD. THE NAMIBIAN TRADE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER'S RECENTLY REPORTED COMMENTS THAT SOUTH AFRICA, RESPONDING TO DOMESTIC PRESSURES, HAS DELIBERATELY HAMPERED ITS NEIGHBORS' INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN ORDER TO PROTECT SOUTH AFRICAN BUSINESSES SUGGEST THAT FORGING REGIONAL COOPERATION WILL BE AS CHALLENGING IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AS IN EUROPE OR NORTH AMERICA. WITH SADC MEMBER STATES PROGRESSING AT DIFFERENT PACES AND STRUGGLING WITH DIFFERENT DISADVANTAGES, IT WILL TAKE A FIRM COMMITMENT BY ALL 12 MEMBERS, PARTICULARLY SOUTH AFRICA, TO PROVE THAT, ACTING TOGETHER, SADC COUNTRIES WILL BE BETTER OFF THAN IF THEY ACT ALONE.

DELISI